

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TUNIS 00070 051806Z  
ACTION NEA-07

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P 051630Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9456  
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

S E C R E T TUNIS 0070

LIMDIS

CAIRO FOR CODEL ZABLOCKI, PARIS FOR LABATT

E.O.11652: GDS  
TAGS: ELAB, TS  
SUBJ: CRITICISM OF AFL-CIO ROLE IN TUNISIAN POLITICAL  
PROBLEMS

REF: (A) 77 TUNIS 9050 (NOTAL) (B) 77 STATE 300776 (NOTAL)

1. DURING CODEL ZABLOCKI'S AUDIENCE WITH PRESIDENT  
BOURGUIBA JANUARY 4, HIS SON AND NEWLY NAMED "SPECIAL  
ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT", HABIB BOURGUIBA, JR., TOOK ME  
ASIDE TO ASK IF CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI AND I COULD REMAIN  
BEHIND FOR PRIVATE CHAT WITH HIMSELF WHILE REMAINDER OF  
CODEL WENT ON VISIT TO NEARBY U.S. MILITARY CEMETARY.  
CHAIRMAN WAS AGREEABLE.

2. IN BOURGUIBA JR.'S OFFICE WE WERE TOLD THAT HE  
DECIDED A SHORT SESSION TOGETHER WOULD BE USEFUL TO THE  
U.S. AND TUNISIA WHEN THE CHAIRMAN HAD RELAYED TO  
PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA THE GREETINGS OF AFL-CIO PRESIDENT  
GEORGE MEANY, OF HIS OWN FRIENDSHIP FOR MEANY AND  
MEANY'S LONG-STANDING ADMIRATION FOR TUNISIA AND  
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BOURGUIBA. BOURGUIBA, JR. SAID HE FELT THE TIME HAD  
COME TO SPEAK FRANKLY ABOUT THE UNHELPFUL ROLE HE CLAIMED  
AFL-CIO HAD PLAYED IN RECENT UGTT-GOT CONFRONTATIONS.  
HE WAS REFERRING CHIEFLY TO IRVING BROWN'S TELEGRAM OF  
SYMPATHY LAST NOVEMBER TO HABIB ACHOUR ON THE OCCASION  
OF THE ALLEGED "ASSASSINATION" PLOT AGAINST ACHOUR  
(SEE REFTELS). HE BELIEVED BROWN WOULD NOT HAVE SENT

HIS TELEGRAM, WHICH ACHOUR UTILIZED TO SUCH GOOD EFFECT HERE, WITHOUT MEANY'S APPROVAL. BOURGUIBA, JR. SAID HE FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE USG EXPLAIN TO MEANY AND BROWN THAT WHAT IS AT ISSUE HERE NOW IS NAKED POLITICS IN WHICH ACHOUR AND HIS ACCMPLICES (READ MOHAMED MASMOUDI AND TAHAR BELKHODJA) ARE TRYING TO DESTROY WHAT HAS BEEN BUILT UP HERE AND TO MANEUVER THEMSELVES INTO POWER. THE TROUBLE HAS BASICALLY NOTHING TO DO WITH LABOR OR WORKINGMEN'S RIGHTS. THESE HAVE BEEN AND ALWAYS WILL BE RESPECTED.

3.

I TOOK THE OCCASION TO INFORM BOURGUIBA, JR. THAT I FELT HE UNDERESTIMATED BROWN'S AND THE AFL-CIO'S APPRECIATION OF THE CURRENT LOCAL POLITICAL SITUATION. I SAID WE HAD BEEN REPEATING ALL OUR RECENT TRAFFIC ON THE ACHOUR VS. GOT STORY TO PARIS WHERE OUR LABOR ATTACHE WAS IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE BROWN WITH THE INFORMATION HE MIGHT NEED. MOREOVER, AFL-CIO HAD RECENTLY ASKED THE DEPARTMENT AND OURSELVES TO BRIEF THEM ON THE PRESENT STAND-OFF AND WE HAD DONE SO. WE HAD SPECIFICALLY RECOMMENDED THAT OUR FRIEND, IRVING BROWN, NOT VISIT TUNISIA AT THIS JUNCTURE. THIS SEEMED TO ASSUAGE OUR HOST SOMEWHAT.

4. ON DEPARTING I SPOKE BRIEFLY TO HIM IN FRENCH ABOUT  
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MY SPENDING NEW YEAR'S WEEKEND ON THE ISLAND OF DJERBA WITH THE FAMILY OF A CLOSE MUTUAL TUNISIAN FRIEND AND OF BRINGING ALONG MOHAMED MASMOUDI'S NEW BOOK "LES ARABES DANS LA TEMPETE" FOR READING MATERIAL. HIS COMMENT WAS A RATHER VULGAR AMERICAN EPITHET. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD WANT TO SEE ME IN THE NEXT DAY OR TWO TO GIVE ME THE BACKGROUND ON THE RECENT CABINET CRISIS WHICH CONSTITUTED A "A PLOT WORSE THAN THE ONE IN 1962" (REFERRING TO A NASSER-INSPIRED PLOT TO ASSASSINATE HIS FATHER). I TOLD HIM I WOULD BE AVAILABLE AT ANY TIME HE CHOSE.

5. IF DEPARTMENT HAS NO OBJECTION IF BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE LABATT PARIS BRIEF AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVE IRVING BROWN, AS OLD FRIEND OF TUNISIAN LEADERSHIP, ON CONTENTS OF THIS TELEGRAM AND OTHER RECENT MESSAGES FROM THIS POST REGARDING THE UGTT-GOT CONFRONTATION.  
MULCAHY

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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